Approaches to texts (A slightly exaggerated view)

A: Traditional approach:

Pre-reading:

- Teacher pre-teaches vocabulary to eliminate all obstacles for a complete understanding of the text

While-reading:

- Teacher hands out text (with vocabulary annotations provided by the publisher)
- Pupils read the text aloud (Making quite a number of pronunciation mistakes, which the teacher often immediately corrects)
- Teachers asks: 'Any unknown words?' (Lengthy explanations follow: 'But we have had this!' /'Can someone explain …?'- Explanation follows in the form of the German equivalent…)
- Teacher asks global comprehension questions- Pupil(s) answer (s)
- Teacher asks detailed comprehension questions- Pupil(s) answer (s)
- Teacher monitors analysis of stylistic/formal features of the text
- Teacher asks interpretation questions (cf. Teacher's handbook provided by the publisher)

Post-reading:

- As homework pupils write a summary of the text
- As homework pupils write a comment about the text (the very daring ones write a letter to/ a diary entry/a newspaper article- or even an email- which looks like any other text…)

Student-activating approach:

Pre-reading:

- Teacher helps to establish a link between text and pupils
- Teacher activates pupils' prior knowledge (content/vocabulary/structures/etc)
- Pupils speculate what the text might be about etc
- Provides tools for extensive/intensive reading (reading strategies, dictionaries etc)
- Pupils define the purpose of reading

While-reading:

- If necessary: Pupils buy the original paperback version
- Pupils express first reactions (non-verbally, verbally, in writing)
- Pupils orientate themselves in the text/define islands of recognition
- Pupils compare their speculations with the text
- Pupils formulate questions/define areas of non-understanding/preliminary understanding
- Pupils analyse relevant features of the text
- Pupils research relevant aspect
- Pupils 'translate/try out' their hypotheses/preliminary understanding/uncertainty by means of various 'texts'

Post-reading:

- Pupils show their 'reading' of the text/their response to the text by means of appropriate text products

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Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.
(Robert Frost: The Road Not Taken (1915)